

## Message Text

PAGE 01 SEOUL 01124 200146Z

63/62

ACTION SS-30

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R 150845Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2518

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

S E C R E T SEOUL 1124

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (MRN 1124 VICE 1125)

CANBERRA PASS ASSISTANT SECRETARY INGERSOLL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KS, KN, AS

SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN RECOGNITION OF NORTH KOREA

1. IN MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR, AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR BOURCHIER DISCUSSED HIS LATEST ENCOUNTER WITH MOFA RE AUSTRALIAN RECOGNITION OF NORTH KOREA
2. BOURCHIER SAID THAT MOFA VICE MINISTER LHO SIN-YONG CALLED HIM ASIDE BEFORE FEBRUARY 15 MEETING OF UN MEMORIAL CEMETERY COMMISSION. LHO WARNED THAT EARLY AUSTRALIAN RECOGNITION OF NORTH KOREA WOULD LEAD TO ROK REMOVAL OF AMBASSADOR AND EMBASSY STAFF. FOR HIS PART BOURCHIER PRESSED LHO FOR REASONS ROKG WISHES TO DELAY AUSTRALIAN RECOGNITION UNTIL SUMMER.
3. LHO GAVE TWO REASONS. FIRST OF ALL HE CONFIDED THAT ROKG HAS RECEIVED REPORT THAT NORTH KOREANS ARE PREPARING TO ATTACK SOUTH IN JUNE. ACCORDING LHO, REPORT SAID RUSSIANS INDICATED TO NORTH KOREANS THEY WOULD NOT SUPPORT INVASION WHILE CHINESE COMMUNISTS WERE NON-COMMITAL. SECOND REASON GIVEN BY LHO WAS TO EFFECT THAT ROKG EXPECTING SOME FURTHER MOVES BY USSR IN SPRING TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH ROKG.

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4. BOURCHIER SAID THAT BEFORE REPORTING TO CANBERRA HE WANTED OUR ASSESSMENT OF LHO'S COMMENTS, PARTICULARLY RE IMMINENCE OF NORTH KOREAN INVASION. AMBASSADOR REPLIED THAT LHO OBVIOUSLY REFERRING TO ROK INTELLIGENCE REPORT WHICH KOREANS HAVE DISCUSSED WITH US.

THIS REPORT WAS BASED ON CONTACT BETWEEN ROK INTELLIGENCE AGENT AND RUSSIAN IN TOKYO. WE DO NOT HAVE ANY INDEPENDENT INFORMATION SUPPORTING THAT REPORT. WE BELIEVE THAT SINGLE ROK INTELLIGENCE REPORT IS TENUOUS BASIS FOR CONCLUSION THAT NORTH KOREAN INVASION IS IMMINENT. HOWEVER SUCH A REPORT DOES EXIST AND ROKG DOES TAKE IT SERIOUSLY.

5. WITH REGARD TO POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS IN RELATIONS BETWEEN ROK AND USSR, AMBASSADOR SAID THAT IT TRUE ROKG DOES SEEM TO EXPECT SOME FURTHER DEVELOPMENT ALONG LINES VERY LIMITED STEPS RUSSIANS HAVE TAKEN TO DATE WITH REGARD TO CONTACTS WITH SOUTH KOREA.

6. BOURCHIER INDICATED HE WOULD TRY TO ELICIT FROM LHO CLEARER STATEMENT OF WHETHER ROKG WOULD BE WILLING TO ACCPET A SPECIFIC TIME IN SUMMER AFTER WHICH IT WOULD ACCEPT GOA RECOGNITION OF NORTH KOREA. SAID ALSO HE WOULD TRY TO FURTHER SOUND LHO OUT IN TERMS OF PURPORTED NORTH KOREAN INVASION THREAT.

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